

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN CALLIGRAPHY:  
CALLIGRAPHY AS A TOOL IN  
CHURCH MINISTRY

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BY  
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## ABSTRACT

Historically speaking, the art of calligraphy has always been closely related to the church. Before the invention of the printing press, scribes meticulously copied literary works of great importance to humans. More often than not, these works were of a sacred nature. With the invention of the printing press, the need for calligraphy diminished, and the appreciation for the art of the scribes suffered a decline which only very recently has begun to change.

This project demonstrates in theoretical and practical ways, how calligraphy might prove to be useful even today in the ministry in local churches. Through an examination of the aesthetics of the calligraphed medium, and by relating calligraphy to the church's three-fold task of kerygma, didache, and koinonia, calligraphy is here suggested as an aesthetically beautiful means by which ministry may be accomplished in the church.

The theoretical contentions of this project are illustrated by a series of twenty-five leaves which have been calligraphed and illuminated by the author. These leaves contain the calligraphed text of the Sermon on the Mount from the book of Matthew and are presented and analyzed as actual examples of some of the possibilities for calligraphy in church ministry.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The Christian artist in any age faces a double demand: a faithfulness to his artistic discipline, the anguish of sheer craftsmanship and creation that is required of all artists; and faithfulness to his religious perception, his awareness of the ultimate meaning of life.<sup>1</sup>

### GENERAL STATEMENT

I cannot remember a time when I have not been involved in some kind of artistic endeavor. Throughout my life, I have continually found something to keep me interested in that wide scope of creativity we call "art." Sometimes, my interest in a particular medium would be short-lived. Often, I was discouraged. For that reason, it has been important to me, and not a little surprising, that I have been involved in calligraphy for more than a decade.

Someone once sent my family a fruitcake as a small gift. It was that fruitcake which first aroused in me a keen interest in beautiful handwriting. The fruitcake arrived beautifully boxed with a label printed in a kind

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Whittle, Christianity and the Arts (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 11.

of type called "Northern Gothic" or "Old English."

I recall how impressed I was by the beauty of the letters as I examined that label. I remember experiencing a keen desire to copy the letters, and to employ them in signs and posters. My first calligraphic endeavor, then, was copying the label "coloring book" style. This involved meticulously measuring each letter on the label and drawing an outline of that letter in proportion with a pencil and straightedge upon a separate sheet of paper. I then carefully colored in the outline to obtain a solid letter like those which had been printed on the label.

Having thus accomplished the entire label, I discovered that I did not yet have a complete set of twenty-six letters. I looked in encyclopedias and dictionaries, with little success; and it was only upon examination of my King James Version of the Bible that I was able to complete my alphabet. It seems that Bibles and other literature written in the archaic language of the King James Bible is thought to be best accompanied with titles printed in the Northern Gothic type. I can remember the delight I experienced as I realized that the Book of Zechariah would furnish me with a model for the letter Z.

From that beginning, I developed an interest in words, syntax, and languages, which led me to major in French language and literature at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. It was there, in my third semester,

that I met the late Professor Russell Limbach, who introduced me to the formal aspects of training in the art of calligraphy.

Following that exposure, I spent a semester studying in Paris, spending too much time visiting the grand museums where, among other things, my attention was absorbed by pages and pages of calligraphic art. One of the most cherished souvenirs I have of my stay in Europe is a pen that I had purchased in London to calligraph with. I had left all my art supplies in Connecticut, thinking that I should pack lightly, never suspecting that I would find the time to do any artwork in Europe, and never imagining the wealth of examples to be found which would stir my desire to take up the pen to calligraph.

Upon my return to the United States, I found that Professor Limbach had died. Replacing him on the faculty was David Schorr, a graphic artist and recent graduate of Yale University's School of Fine Arts. Under David Schorr, I began to expand my knowledge of calligraphy, and with it, my appreciation for the beauty of its line and space, as well as the beauty of its message. In addition, I declared a double major and sought to complete the requirements for the added major in Art.

In the terminology of Suzanne Langer, David Schorr opened my eyes to the beauty of the virtual space and the beauty of the virtual life in calligraphy. Under David, I

was encouraged to become less of a copyist (who merely duplicates someone else's art) and more of an artist (one who creates out of his/her own artistic vision).

Under David's guidance, I began work on a senior thesis, A History of Roman Calligraphy, with the added assistance of Professor John O. C. McCrillis of the Yale University Press, and Ms. Jane Greenfield, bookbinder with the Yale University Press and Greenfield's bindery in New Haven. It was under these three artists that I found my artistic niche.

Yet, upon graduation and along with my decision to attend seminary in preparation for the local church ministry, I became acutely aware of the fact that neither of my undergraduate majors, in French and in Art, was especially important for ministry. Thus, this project exemplifies one attempt to resolve the question of how the art of calligraphy can become a useful tool for the ministry in the local church.

#### GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK

The history of art is closely allied with the history of religious thought. Upon examination of the earliest examples of what we label "human artistic creation," we are able to discern a close relationship existing between the forms created and the creator's religious beliefs. Art has always been a means by which persons could communicate.



Moreover, throughout the history of art, the object of this communication has very often been matters which we might label "religious." Drawings of animals by prehistoric mankind are generally acknowledged to be attempts to control the animals.

Referring to attempts to research cave art in the Southwest United States, Heizer states:

We feel that for the first time we have demonstrated that petroglyphs in Nevada and eastern California are evidence of the purposefulness and rational action of prehistoric peoples. They are not aimless "doodling," nor are they deliberate and planned expressions of the artistic impulse. We think that we have proved that petroglyphs in the area we have studied are to be understood as a part of the economic pursuit of hunting large game. Thus, petroglyphs are part of the magical or ritual aspect of taking large game.<sup>2</sup>

On the eve of a hunt, the drawing of a bison being felled by spears was deeply rooted in the belief that the animal's spirit could thus be controlled. In addition, many "Greek geometrical ornaments, like the realistic prehistoric drawings of animals, are attempts to come nearer to the creature, to control them."<sup>3</sup>

In these examples, art is closely related to religion. This relationship exists primarily because of the necessity of humans to express their deepest spiritual feelings. In

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<sup>2</sup>Robert F. Heizer and Martin A. Baumhoff, Prehistoric Rock Art of Nevada and Eastern California (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Gerardus van der Leeuw, Sacred and Profane Beauty (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963) p. 159.

order to communicate what has ultimate meaning for the individual, art avails itself as one of the most creative and individualistic means. It has been said that in its quest for essential, not surface, meaning, great art is the companion of religion and philosophy. It helps man understand who he is and why he is.

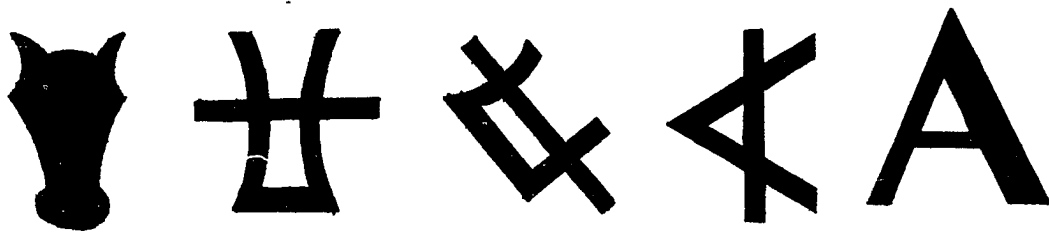
Such is the case for almost all forms of art, and it is no different for calligraphy. The art of the scribe, calligraphy is often defined simply as "beautiful handwriting." More specifically, however, one should mention that calligraphy was developed as an artistic means of achieving the essential act of human communication. The first evidences of drawings on cave walls were graphic symbols which gave rise to the written word. They were a means of communication, and yet, more important, they were products of primitive man's artistic creativity. In this humble beginning of writing, art and graphic communication were one and the same.

Before examining the central problem of this project; that is, the specific relation of calligraphy to local church ministry, perhaps a word or two should be added about the changes that have taken place in the relation between art and graphic communication.

Paleographers are able to trace the individual histories of many of the letters or symbols used in written language. Here, a fascinating progression of

development can be observed, following a contemporary letter from the earliest symbol that can be found which ultimately has given us that letter.

For example, the ancient Semites used a graphic system composed of a series of signs. Their word for "bull" would correspond most closely with the phonetic equivalent "aleph." The symbol for this word was a simple picture of a bull's head. Originally, whenever this symbol occurred, it stood for the sound "aleph," and connoted the idea of a bull. Through the centuries, this symbol developed into the letter A through the following progression of simplifications:<sup>4</sup>



The development of a letter from the representational drawing, as seen above, shows the progression toward the separation of graphic communication from art. In the development above, the result of the many centuries of change is a symbol which carries a phonetic value. No longer is the letter A a sign for the sound "aleph." No longer is there necessarily the connotation of the bull whenever it is seen. The idea of drawing a picture to

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<sup>4</sup>John Howard Benson and Arthur Graham Carey, The Elements of Lettering (Newport, D. T. Stevens, 1940), pp. 42-47.

represent an idea or an object gave rise to the utilization of a standard group of symbols used phonetically to communicate.

Graphic communication began to develop into a means of precise description or suggestion of thoughts and ideas without visual or pictorial aid via the written word. Over the centuries, the symbol A came to represent only the initial phonetic sound of "aleph." The idea of the bull was no longer important to the use of the symbol in the process of graphic communication. This situation represents the complete separation of art and graphic communication. As written communication evolved apart from the original practical qualities of the symbols and drawings of primitive humanity, the emphasis was clearly placed not so much upon the beauty of the drawings, as much as it was upon the content of the written communication. Perhaps it is for this reason that calligraphed manuscripts began to be lavishly illuminated with larger, more colorful and ornate letters, and special design motifs. The calligraphed manuscript was not considered to constitute a work of art. Only after the more conventional forms of the art of painting and drawing and ornamentation were added was the calligraphed manuscript considered "beautiful."

Prior to the invention of the printing press, calligraphy was the only means by which written works

could be reproduced. Because of the overwhelming need for and importance of literature of a religious nature, such as the Bible, prayer books, and hymnals, calligraphy often is most beautifully evidenced in books of a sacred nature.

With the invention of the printing press, the need for calligraphy diminished rapidly. The printing press has all but annihilated the ability for the majority of persons to appreciate calligraphy. In our present lack of need for scribes or time-consuming calligraphy, and in our need for many copies quickly and inexpensively produced, we have forgotten much of the beauty and importance that a calligraphed passage can import. In this sense, although calligraphy was once tied very closely to the literature of the church, it no longer is recognized as an artistic possibility in the local churches of today.

A quick survey of calligraphic arts in the local church at the present reveals very little of the medium in its purest form. At first glance, we may find calligraphy in diplomas, certificates, memorials, or in an occasional picture of an illuminated Bible; but other than these sparse traces of the art of the scribe, most lettering is not calligraphic in its truest sense.

Examples of this kind of lettering abound: carved inscriptions in wood or stone, lettering in textile upon banners or paraments, letters within a stained glass window, and most commonly, in the printed word in Bibles, hymnals,

orders of worship, and other literature. In these examples, the artistic rendering of letter forms is subordinated by other media. The wood or stone, the fabric, glass, and the type-printed page are very definitely related historically and formally to the calligraphic art of the scribe. In fact, the first movable type faces were designed in order to print letters closely duplicating the appearance of the calligraphed letters. Yet, these examples lack the essential element in calligraphy: the artistic experience of the formation of letters handwritten one by one and the accumulation of these letters to form words, finally resulting in the creation of an aesthetically pleasing and coherent work of art.

Although local churches generally lack examples of calligraphy in its purest sense, a more careful scrutiny may reveal a great deal more about the existence or persistence of calligraphy in the church than one might expect. Calligraphy exists as an art medium in its purest form in every hand-made poster or written message that is produced. It is part of every person's own identity whenever a signature is placed anywhere. Calligraphy even exists as a form of art expression in the graffiti that mars the beauty of more and more of our buildings. Thus, calligraphy should hardly be an art form foreign to most persons.

Perhaps the most important realization we can come to regarding calligraphy in local churches is that anyone

who writes can participate in the art. We might go even further to say that every person who understands letters and their forms can participate in this artistic medium. Gelb states, "In order to communicate thoughts and feelings there must be a conventional system of signs or symbols, which, when used by some persons, are understood by other persons receiving them."<sup>5</sup> Calligraphy undoubtedly serves this purpose.

Especially in its role as an art useful in church ministry, calligraphy is a medium that should be judged with an understanding of the artistic effort that precedes the finished product. Part of the beauty of the calligraphed page lies in the consideration of the large amount of work that is put into a project. It is this artistic effort which results in a piece of calligraphic art which is the only one of its kind. Like an original painting, calligraphy is unique.

It has been said that calligraphy is ten percent knowledge and ninety percent practice. However, this is not necessarily true, for there is much more to calligraphy than knowledge and practice. It is more than a mere exercise in penmanship and perseverance. It can also be a challenge to one's artistic capabilities and literary sensibilities. There are a number of steps in the process

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<sup>5</sup>I. J. Gelb, A Study of Writing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 1.

leading to the production of a book or a project such as this one which would seem to support this opinion.

The first step is the acquiring of the knowledge mentioned above. This involves the use of historic examples, in photographs or originals, or facsimiles of the originals. A number of examples must be examined since no two calligraphers wrote identically. In addition, time and geographic differences also affect differences in the hands. Thus, each example must be closely examined and compared in order that the hand one eventually acquires through practice is an eclectic one.

The second step is the acquiring of complete ease with a hand. This is accomplished only with many hours of practice. The calligrapher must learn the letter forms so that he is able to draw upon them from memory, without having to look back constantly at the models. Only by memorizing each letter can the forms become integrated into the natural motions of the hand. Yet, simple memorization of the letters is not enough. A good calligrapher must know instinctively how different letters combine with other letters in the context of a word. These combinations must be accomplished very naturally or they tend to resemble letters that have been cut and pasted individually onto a sheet of paper to form words.

Being at ease with a hand also involves an ability to notice slight differences in letters found in different



manuscripts and to incorporate these different letter forms into a unified, consistent, and beautiful hand. If there is an abundance of examples, this involves making a choice, for example, of which of three or four forms of the letter A one will use on the calligraphed page. Many times, it also may mean inventing a form for a letter.

The third step in the production of a project such as this one is research into the history of each hand. There seems to be a chapter in the history of the world that could accompany each hand, and in order to gain a better understanding of the reasons why a particular hand developed and subsequently disappeared, one must know the important historical facts: when the hand was used, where it was used, from what hand or hands it was evolved, when how, and why it was eventually abandoned or modified. All these questions and more, when researched, yield a clearer understanding of the hand, and a greater appreciation of its forms.

Beside the above-mentioned "mechanical" prerequisites, the artistic vision is unquestionably necessary for calligraphy. The calligrapher must be able to look at a blank sheet of paper and visualize the calligraphed page upon it much as sculptors are sometimes said to look upon a block of stone until an image can be seen emerging from it. This is truly the artistic test put to the calligrapher. Obtaining a hand is only half of the process.

The decision-making sequence which leads to the production of a calligraphed page which is a work of art is the other half.

When all decisions have been made, and a work has been calligraphed, the final result may be judged to be a "beautiful" work of calligraphic art if it is able to exude a specific mood or feeling through the use of various motifs and colors. A good calligrapher should be able to take his primary material and manipulate the paper, pens, and ink in such a way that the formal aspects of the calligraphy may all be uniformly exploited to the end of this mood or feeling. Motifs used historically, for example, at different times and in different cultures may be added to the variation of shapes of the letter of different hands in order to achieve this effect. This is the artistic challenge of calligraphy.

In its rich variations of form, calligraphy is truly a versatile art. Indeed, it must employ this versatility to its fullest potential in order to be something more than language.

## Chapter II

### THE AESTHETIC VALUE OF CALLIGRAPHY

Unfortunately, for many reasons, there has been a frightful divorce between theology and the arts. And where there has been a relationship, the aesthetic standards of most theologians have been low. Many of the pictures on the walls, the books on the shelves, and the records played are products of a sentimental, pietistic dilution of aesthetic integrity.<sup>1</sup>

Without a doubt, we need "good" art in the local church. Many persons have debated the difference between "good" and "bad" art. Yet, when we speak of art or a philosophy of art, no other philosopher has shaped my feelings and views as dramatically as Suzanne K. Langer. According to Langer, art may be defined as "...the expression of human consciousness in a single metaphorical image,"<sup>2</sup> or "the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling."<sup>3</sup> Even at this stage it is reasonable to assume that there must be, as we have stated, a close relationship between art and religion. Both deal invariably with human feeling.

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<sup>1</sup>John P. Newport, Theology and Contemporary Art Forms (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Suzanne K. Langer, Problems of Art (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Suzanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 40.

Unfortunately, Langer does not directly address the medium of calligraphy. Based upon her treatment of vocal music in Feeling and Form, however, we can begin to develop a view of calligraphy as a product of the assimilation process in operation between plastic art and poetic art.

Langer uses the example of vocal music to show how two art forms can be combined, with one completely dominating the other. In the case of music, Langer states that the poetry is assimilated into the music.<sup>4</sup>

Using this as a model, we may say that calligraphy is actually the art which results from the combination of the calligraphic medium, which is a plastic art, and poetry. To be a successful piece of calligraphic art, the poetry should become an element of the letter forms, and should exist to aid in the creation and development of the primary illusion of calligraphy which is virtual space.<sup>5</sup>

#### CALLIGRAPHY AS A PLASTIC ART

On one hand, calligraphy is one of the so-called plastic arts. Whenever I see a calligraphed page, I am immediately confronted with the self-directed question: Is it beautiful? This question calls for a cut-and-dried answer; usually either affirmative or negative, it calls

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

for a value judgment, based upon my "gut reaction" to the piece."<sup>6</sup>

### Significant Form

That this is the first question is based upon the fact that as a plastic art, the viewer must necessarily judge the artistic merits of the work by its significant form. Quoting Clive Bell, Langer states:

There must be some one quality without which a work of art cannot exist; possessing which, in the least degree, no work is altogether worthless. What is this quality? What quality is shared by all objects that provoke our aesthetic emotions?... Only one answer seems possible--significant form. What quality is common to Santa Sophia and the windows at Chartres, Mexican sculpture, a Persian bowl, Chinese carpets, Giotto's frescoes at Padua, and the masterpieces of Poussin, Piero della Francesca, and Cezanne? Only one answer seems possible --significant form. In each, lines and colors combine in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotion. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these authentically moving forms, I call "Significant Form"; and "Significant Form" is one quality common to all works of visual arts.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>John B. Cobb states, "...we may speak of 'the aesthetic' as including both the aesthetically objectionable and the aesthetically satisfactory. However, when we speak of 'the aesthetic' we normally mean that which is aesthetically satisfactory. We may use the term 'beauty' for this significant positive value if we can escape from the connotations of simple attractiveness, prettiness, or pleasantness which sometimes attach to the word." John B. Cobb, Jr., "Toward Clarity in Aesthetics," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, (December 1957), 170.

<sup>7</sup>Langer, Feeling and Form, pp. 32-33.

The significant form of a calligraphed passage exists first in the arrangement of the primary material of the work. In Hospers' categorizing of the aesthetic experience, this arrangement refers to the "raw materials" of the calligraphed page: paper and ink. "Beauty" in calligraphy lies initially in the way that the calligrapher has taken his primary materials and arranged them with a discerning eye, evaluating the lines, colors, spaces, and rhythms of the letters upon the page. It is contingent upon effective use of decoration.

Langer states:

The immediate effect of good decoration is to make the surface, somehow, more visible; a beautiful border on a textile not only emphasizes the edge but enhances the plain folds, and a regular all-over pattern, if it is good, unifies rather than diversifies the surface. In any case, even the most elementary design serves to concentrate and hold one's vision to the expanse it adorns.<sup>8</sup>

It is this very kind of decoration which makes calligraphy a plastic art. In the calligrapher's manipulation of the raw materials of his work, are the potentials for the achievement of a work of art. This art becomes a "picture space that exists for vision alone."<sup>9</sup> Without this decorative line, which defines a visible surface, calligraphy is no more than just "words."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>10</sup>Let us contrast this to Croce's statement: "Writings are not physical facts which arouse directly impressions

## Surface and Form

Hospers' categorical approach to aesthetics is a valuable tool in understanding this concept. Speaking of surface and form, Hospers<sup>11</sup> would challenge us to "view" a piece of calligraphic art with keen attention to the surface beauty: one would need to touch the paper; to see beauty in the colors of the ink upon the page; to observe the thicks and the thins of the pen's strokes upon the paper.

One would also be required to view the form of the calligraphy; to observe the uniformity or diversity of the "block" of letters upon the paper; to see the relationship of the individual letters within the context of the words upon the page. Balance is important. One must observe the relative uniformity in the letters; the straightness of the lines of letters, the occasional variation of dark and light, or thick and thin, or rounded and flat letters.

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answering to aesthetic expression; they are simple indications of what must be done in order to produce such physical facts. A series of graphic signs serves to remind us of the movements which we must execute with our vocal apparatus in order to emit certain definite sounds. If, through practice, we become able to hear the words without opening our mouths and to hear the sounds by running the eye along the stave, all this does not alter in any way the nature of the writings, which are altogether different from direct physical beauty." Benedetto Croce, Aesthetic (New York: Noonday Press, 1956), pp. 100-101.

<sup>11</sup>See John Hospers, Meaning and Truth in the Arts (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946) pp. 9ff.

This is an important aspect of calligraphy, for in its role as "plastic art," calligraphy strives to achieve the effect whereby

Every element of design, every use of color and semblance of shape, serves to produce and support and develop the picture space that exists for vision alone.<sup>12</sup>

This is the space which is, according to Langer, the primary illusion of calligraphy. This is virtual space. Here, Langer's concepts are very much akin to the concepts which Hospers labels "surface" and "form" and "primary material." As such, they become important terms as we consider calligraphy as a "plastic art."

Hospers discusses yet another concept which is important to our understanding of the beauty of calligraphy as a plastic art. This is the concept of "subject matter." To distinguish this sense of the word from others which will be discussed in relation to calligraphy as poetic art, we may label this concept "subject matter<sub>1</sub>"<sup>13</sup>

### Subject Matter<sub>1</sub>

According to Hospers, calligraphy would have a subject matter<sub>1</sub>. This is the model or object of imitation. Because it exists outside the work itself, it is important

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<sup>12</sup>Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 72.

<sup>13</sup>As per the designation by William Jack Coogan in his class entitled "The Problem of Meaning in Religious Art," School of Theology at Claremont, Spring 1976.



to mention that in many respects, calligraphy is initially the work of a copyist. The first step in calligraphy involves the study and copying of an objective subject matter, existing outside of the work. Thus, beside its own formal beauty, calligraphy may owe a part of its beauty as a plastic art to the existence of a subject matter<sub>1</sub> which is itself beautiful.

### CALLIGRAPHY AS A POETIC ART

If calligraphy is on one hand, a plastic art, it is on the other hand, poetic art, primarily because as a means of human communication, it has to do with words. In Poetry and Myth, Prescott defines the limits of this term.

Poetry, in the true sense is obviously not something that can be fixed on a printed page and bound up in volumes; it is rather made up of the series of thoughts and feelings, induced by the printed symbols, succeeding each other in the reader's mind.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, when speaking of calligraphy as poetic art, we do not necessarily mean only what is called "lyric poetry." Langer uses the term primarily because in lyric poetry, her observations regarding all literature as art are most clearly and obviously illustrated. Whittle concurs as he states:

The poet's craft and genius lie in his use of words, the patterns and rhythms which he creates with them, the vision he communicates and the responses which his work evokes in us. Like all artists he has this

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<sup>14</sup>Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 249.

twofold function of "seer" and "maker"--to perceive the nature, beauty, and order of things and experiences; and to create a form for this vision, to manipulate words and images in order to describe and communicate.<sup>15</sup>

As mentioned previously, the first reaction to a calligraphed page is one which judges whether or not it is "beautiful." The second reaction, then, is the reading of the words that are calligraphed and the making of yet another judgment: whether or not the words and ideas (therefore, the "poetry") are meaningful.

Because of the importance of literature as an art form, and because sacred literature has always held an important position in the field of literature, it is not surprising that calligraphers initially calligraphed works of importance to religious institutions. Originally, sacred works were very highly desired; and therefore, were meticulously copied by scribes. Even for today's calligrapher, the desire to calligraph literature of significance leads quite naturally to sacred literature of the church. As Gerardus van der Leeuw states:

Most of the writings of the Old and New Covenant belong to the highest level of art. And even if Genesis and the Psalms, Job and Isaiah, John and Paul, were not the great works of art that they are, they would still prove that verbal art can be an expression of the holy. Certainly they, too, are inadequate; they, too, point beyond themselves to a word which is neither sound, nor image, but form.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Whittle, p. 92.

<sup>16</sup>Gerardus van der Leeuw, Sacred and Profane Beauty (San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), pp. 137-38.

### Virtual Life

The decision whether or not the poetry is meaningful is based to a great extent upon persons' personal preference and "taste." In Langerian terms, the decision focuses upon "taste" in terms of the most important requisite of a piece of poetic arts, which is its primary illusion, virtual life.

The poet's business is to create the appearance of "experiences," the semblance of events lived and felt, and to organize them so they constitute a purely and completely experienced reality, a piece of virtual life.<sup>17</sup>

This concept of virtual life is more clearly defined by Hospers. According to him, the Langerian "virtual life" is clearly evidenced in his terms "life value" and "subject matter." In the art of its poetry (Langer) or in the art of its literature (Hospers), calligraphy receives the dimension of aesthetic life value, which in turn gives rise to a consideration of the poetic subject matter.

### Life Value

Hospers states that "life value" is that which is conveyed through form, and upon surface.<sup>18</sup> It involves making a value judgment. In the case of calligraphy, not

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<sup>17</sup>Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 212.

<sup>18</sup>Hospers, p. 12.

all calligraphers will calligraph in a beautiful way (as the term relates to plastic art). However, a piece of calligraphy which is only mediocre in formal beauty may unquestionably still be judged "beautiful" when one considers its "life value." Thus, we may say that the words calligraphed are expressive of many truths in life. To state that "it means something to me," is an appreciation of the calligraphed page's life value.

Once that understanding is obtained, the observer of the calligraphic art penetrates to a higher understanding of the poetic art within calligraphy. An awareness of the more basic considerations of Hospers may explicate this understanding.

### Materials

We spoke about the primary material of a piece of calligraphy: the ink, the paper, the pens. However, the calligrapher brings much more to this artistic task. In addition to primary materials, Hospers addresses the concept of "secondary material" which may help to explain the poetic value of calligraphy.

"Materials" for art are not simply the world or objects in it as such but the artist's experience which has been moulded by these materials and out of which he creates his work; the things and events in the world, which moulded and shaped his experience, are materials in a more remote sense.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

These are the materials which endow the poetry of the calligraphic art with the meaning of virtual life.

### Subject Matter<sub>2</sub> and Subject Matter<sub>3</sub>

In addition to material, we spoke about subject matter of calligraphy as a plastic art. According to Hospers, calligraphy as poetic art would necessarily involve a subject matter, in a slightly different sense.

According to Hospers, we may distinguish two different senses of the term "subject matter" within calligraphy as poetic art. If the subject matter of the plastic art of calligraphy is deemed "subject matter<sub>1</sub>," we may distinguish from this the terms "subject matter<sub>2</sub>" and "subject matter<sub>3</sub>."

"Subject matter<sub>2</sub>" refers to what is represented in a work of art. In terms of the poetic arts, this would be that which is set before us in the work. Thus, the subject matter<sub>2</sub> of a piece of calligraphic art would be that which is discussed by the poetry of the calligraphy. In terms of a parable, for example, the subject matter<sub>2</sub> would be the sower and the seeds; or the builder and the rock upon which he builds, or the sand upon which another builder constructs a home, as well as the rain, the wind, and the floods.

"Subject matter<sub>3</sub>," according to Hospers, refers to the theme, or higher truth inherent in the poetry of calligraphy. In all the texts used for this project, theme is

very important. It is the subject matter<sub>3</sub> which transforms the parable of the wise and foolish builder into much more than a simple story. It is the theme which the reader searches for in order to justify the Bible's prominence as an important work beyond comparison for the Christian person's faith.

An understanding of the concepts of Hospers and Langer provides an explanation for our consideration of meaning as we attempt to judge a piece of calligraphy.

Calligraphy, as written communication, attempts to utilize life experiences as subject matter and secondary material; to combine these with the artist's ability to manipulate the primary materials and form, in order to create a coherent piece of art. As both poetic and plastic art, calligraphy strives to state something meaningful in a form that is beautiful. It is because of this that calligraphy is more than beautifully arranged lines.

### The Process of Assimilation

Utilizing Langer's comments regarding the assimilation of the poetry of words by the music in vocal music, we may find a similar situation in the assimilation of poetry into the plastic art of calligraphy.

When words enter into music they are no longer prose or poetry, they are elements of the music. Their office is to help create and develop the primary illusion of music, virtual time, and not that of

literature, which is something else; so they give up their literary status and take on purely musical functions.<sup>20</sup>

In a similar manner, the words in calligraphy may be said to be assimilated by the medium of the plastic art. Calligraphy, as an art form, strives to achieve a high degree of formal beauty. It has developed out of a desire to write in a beautiful manner. Historically, scribes developed hands which were much less beautiful than others, and generally used these hands when writing secular material such as billing statements and records of various transactions. When calligraphing, however, the most beautiful hands which were usually the most difficult hands, were employed. In this way, calligraphers retained the sense of uniqueness about the calligraphed leaf.

When poetry and plastic art come together in calligraphy, the result is a work of art that can be appreciated on the basis of its virtual space. Thus, we should be able to appreciate as calligraphic art a French text which is beautifully calligraphed even if we cannot read or understand French. Indeed, in the history of calligraphy, there have been many instances where the calligrapher has sacrificed legibility for formal beauty. This is perhaps the most obvious example of the work of assimilation of poetry by the plastic art of calligraphy. In this

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<sup>20</sup>Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 150.

example, the poetry can become completely subordinate to the beauty of the plastic art.

On another level, Langer states that a poem which "has perfect form, in which everything is said and nothing merely adumbrated, a work completely developed and closed, does not readily lend itself to composition."<sup>21</sup> This type of poem cannot be easily assimilated. It presents great difficulty to the musician attempting to set it to music, demonstrating how poetry must be pliable enough to be rendered to music.

In a similar way, there is poetry that is so self-contained that it cannot be calligraphed effectively. A lyric poem may stubbornly refuse to yield to the calligrapher's desire to create a beautiful leaf. Often, the forms can be manipulated, but if the poetry retains its distinctiveness as poetry, the calligraphic art appears adroit. Calligraphy that is "successful" is that which has as its subject matter<sub>2</sub>, poetry which allows itself to be assimilated by the formal aspects of the plastic art of calligraphy.

Literature (in the broader sense of the term "poetry"), may also be completely unyielding to the calligrapher's pen. Thus, calligraphers often must search for suitable material or attempt repeatedly to manipulate the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 154.



materials into a beautiful, coherent piece of art. Thus, a poem that "has perfect form," cannot "motivate entirely new expressive forms,"<sup>22</sup> which poetry must come to achieve in calligraphy.

A third contention that Langer advances should be considered. Speaking again in terms of vocal music, Langer states that "A folk song played without words may be lovely, but it always sounds a bit simple-minded."<sup>23</sup> It is, in fact, empty, incomplete." In this way, we can conceive of the poetry becoming assimilated as a necessary component of the music. When thus assimilated, the poetry renders itself to the expression of specific moods or feelings associated with the music. It charges the music with a dynamic rhythm.

In calligraphy, the poetry operates in much the same manner. Without the poetry, there would only be beauty of forms. Calligraphy would no longer be distinguishable from drawing or sketching. Like the folk song without words, it may be "lovely," but it would also be "simple-minded," and "incomplete." Only when the poetry is assimilated into the calligraphy can the calligraphy become dynamic. When accompanied by words, even though they may be incomprehensible to us, calligraphy becomes charged with movement, balance, and rhythm. This rhythm is most

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

clearly evidenced as the calligraphed words invite the viewer to read the poetry which has become assimilated into the art of the scribe.

This project has been undertaken because of a basic belief in calligraphy as an important art form historically; and potentially, as a tool in local church ministry. It is quite natural, then, that this project should focus upon a corpus of literary art of real significance to me and to the ministry in the church. The text of the Sermon on the Mount, from Matthew 5:1 through 7:28 has been chosen to accompany this project. Let us turn, then, to a consideration of the specific value that calligraphy may be, and an examination of the twenty-five leaves of calligraphed material from the Sermon on the Mount.

### Chapter III

#### THE VALUE OF CALLIGRAPHY TO CHURCH MINISTRY

Degas' statement that "everything, everything in this world has a sacred meaning" reminds us of the Bible assertion that in the Creation, God saw that all that He had made was good. And it is from this creation that the artist selects his raw materials, his subject matter, and transforms it by bestowing on it what the poet<sup>1</sup> Valery called "harmonious and unforgettable shape."

Within the realm of "church ministry," I believe that calligraphy can serve to effectively accomplish three of the more basic reasons for the existence of the church. It is my contention that calligraphy can be incorporated into any local parish program as a means of proclaiming the Gospel (kerygma), of teaching the Gospel (didache), and of calling the church into community (koinonia). The following sections will deal with these three functions of calligraphy.

It is extremely difficult for me to distinguish between kerygma and didache. Inasmuch as kerygma can be used "to cover all forms of speech in the public ministry of the church, and in that ministry proper teaching and

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<sup>1</sup>Donald Whittle, Christianity and the Arts (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 4.

exhortation are of course included,"<sup>2</sup> that term often includes the concept of didache. As I examine the content of the messages preached in the local church, there is definitely only a fragile distinction between the message proclaimed and the message taught. In this sense, then, the subdivision which follows seems a bit too intellectual, although perhaps for this project, quite necessary.

It is therefore with Davis' understanding of the differences between kerygma and didache that we shall begin: "If the church in New Testament times understood that converts are made by kerygma, it understood as clearly that Christians are equipped and sustained by Christian didache."<sup>3</sup>

#### CALLIGRAPHY AS KERYGMA

....works of art have Christian meaning to a Christian believer; whoever created them and whatever their ostensible themes, they are potentially revelatory to him who sees and hears according to Christ.<sup>4</sup>

In the New Testament church, kerygma was closely tied to the process of evangelism. It was through proclamation that converts to the faith were obtained. In a real sense, this is also true of the local church situation today. We are still concerned about evangelism; we still

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<sup>2</sup>Henry Grady Davis, Design for Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 106.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>4</sup>Roger Hazelton, A Theological Approach to Art (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 47.

desire to spread the Gospel to those who do not yet know of its content. Yet, kerygma is also important to those who already are "converts" to the faith. Kerygma has meaning for those in and outside the church.

If kerygma is considered to be primarily a matter of preaching of the Gospel, it is important to first understand what "Gospel" is. Davis states:

The gospel is the news of God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ our Lord, revealing God's love toward men and his purpose in history, manifesting at once his judgment and his mercy, furnishing a new basis for the revelation between men and God--compassion, forgiveness, unmerited favor and help--and calling into being a reconstituted humanity joined with Christ and living no longer by its biological possibilities but by participation in Christ's life.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, kerygma can be understood as a proclamation to all, believers and non-believers alike. It is a proclamation of the reasons why we should or must establish a relationship with God. Because God has related first to us, we must respond. It is the function of kerygma to announce to humanity the message of God's love and to call persons into response to that love.

Calligraphy can be an extremely valuable aid to kerygma in the local church ministry. The primary goal of calligraphy is to present words in an aesthetically beautiful mode. This goal involves the process of making words visible. Kerygma also seeks to make the words of God public. Therefore, calligraphy can and often will be in the mode of

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<sup>5</sup>Davis, p. 109.

proclamation as it publicly announces the Gospel.

I believe that a more important concept might be the fact that there is an inherent power in the written or spoken word, which gives rise to more words. Newport suggests:

Artists are probing anew in spirited and original ways the issues of ultimate concern with which theology has perennially dealt. Denis de Rougement points out that an authentic work of art is an "oriented or calculated trap for meditation." It magnetizes the sensibility. It fascinates to meditation.<sup>6</sup>

In this sense, calligraphy can be considered a real source of mediation and inspiration in the church. As a product of many hours of labor, calligraphy points out what is important to the calligrapher. The words which are calligraphed are not idle thoughts but rather, they are meaningful enough to the artist to have warranted much patient work.

Thus we may assume the importance of the calligraphed word. When something important is publicly displayed, it makes a statement. It reveals something for consideration by others, and in this sense calligraphy strives to provoke others to meditation.

#### CALLIGRAPHY AS DIDACHE

Perhaps the most obvious function that calligraphy performs in the local church is that of didache. Kilby

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<sup>6</sup>John D. Newport, Theology and Contemporary Art Forms (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1971), p. 21.

states:

Jesus Christ as teacher apparently looked about and laid hold on the first image in sight to lift it to the eternal of which it was indeed a part--wine skins, wayward children, a man tossing seeds, a lamp, a city on a hill, a barren fig tree, a closed door, a lost sheep. He transformed these not alone into practical instruction but into everlasting art. The art is more than a vehicle of instruction; indeed the instruction and the art are one.<sup>7</sup>

Calligraphy is an example of the combination of art and instruction. Displayed in the local church where all might see it, a piece of calligraphic art becomes a beautiful way of teaching.

From the point of view of the calligrapher, learning takes place in two distinct ways. On one hand, whenever a person takes any written material and copies it, that is an act toward memorization. Even before any actual calligraphing takes place, the fact that the artist has chosen a particular literary piece means that he has read it and has found it meaningful.

As the artist calligraphs, he sees the words and then mentally "commands" his hand to pick up the pen and duplicate what he has read. All this brings the calligrapher into a close relationship with the words. It has been my artistic experience that as I calligraph, I sense a feeling of union with the message. Although it is extremely difficult to explain, I might perhaps best

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<sup>7</sup>Clyde S. Kilby, Christianity and Aesthetics (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p. 21.

resort to the explanation that as I calligraph, I begin to sense that the words are more than just word which have been written by someone else. They become my words also, since I am the one who has found meaning in them and since I am the person who is artistically forming the words upon the paper. Thus, the meaning of the words is internalized; the meaning is experienced by the calligrapher as he copies. In this way, the calligrapher learns that which he calligraphs.

In local churches, educational personnel often ponder the question of the need for memory work. Although we have in many instances begun to shy away from pure memorization, it is my belief that calligraphy can accomplish the learning of various material without the same kind of boredom that accompanies rote memorization. If calligraphy can be used as a means of teaching in this way, it can begin to realize its didactic potential in the local church.

This is true for both artist and observer. As I calligraph, I begin to memorize. In addition, from the point of view of the observer of the work, calligraphy can be an important tool for learning. The fact that the words are beautifully calligraphed means that the calligraphy should be displayed and subsequently read by persons. Because it is a piece that commands not only a glimpse of admiration (as a painting might) but also invites the viewer to read what is written, calligraphy can become instrumental in teaching.



Written words have the advantage of representing its message over and over again. The spoken word, once spoken, is lost. The hearer who has not comprehended it has lost it. Calligraphy, on the other hand, is visible, and may be read and reread ad infinitum, as long as it remains visible. In this way, it may become an important part of any teaching ministry in the local church.

Perhaps this might be better considered in terms of an analogy with the numerous posters, billboards, and advertisements we see around us. Many of these are calligraphic in a sense, although here, the more important aspect is the message (poetry). The secondary aspect is the formal qualities (plastic art). The poster strives to attract attention by its formal beauty and to deliver its message ("Eat at Joe's") through the printed word.

Posters belong in the local church. Numerous signs are used to publicize events and programs of the church. Because funds are limited in most churches, these posters are generally handwritten. Thus, they are calligraphic and seek to further meet the potential for didache in local churches.

Calligraphy can be a useful didactic tool in a more theoretical sense. Only recently have I become aware of the importance of form criticism in Biblical studies. One definite use for form critical "awareness" in local churches is as an aid for understanding and appreciation of the

Biblical passages, even on the level of laypersons' understanding of the Bible.

This project attempts to illustrate the value of calligraphy as a means of visually revealing certain formal critical aspects of the texts. Through comparative calligraphing of texts, one can show similarities and differences in genre, through selective use of different hands. A calligrapher can also show the formal aspects of poetry through formal motifs in calligraphy. We can also separate different layers or sections (historically different as well as formally different) of a large corpus of material, and begin to classify them according to their particular form or even time period.

The use of specific hands which were popularly used at different times and/or places can also lend itself to teaching about specific texts. For example, outside of Biblical passages, a literary work written in France in the thirteenth century would most logically be calligraphed in the hand called Northern Gothic (or Old English) like the previously mentioned fruitcake label had been. A work written by a sixteenth century Italian scholar or Catholic priest would most logically be calligraphed in the chancery cursive or italic hand.

Calligraphers also have the primary materials of colors at their disposal. Different colors are symbolic or reminiscent of different moods or times or geographic

areas. Thus, they can become incorporated into the artistic task. Effective use of color can easily help to teach something about a text.

Specific examples of these various motifs in calligraphy will be mentioned in conjunction with the calligraphed work to follow. At this point, then, let us turn to the third function of calligraphy in the local church.

### CALLIGRAPHY AS KOINONIA

We can also define Christian art as a re-enactment of creation. In this case, all works of art, whatever their subject matter, and whatever the attitude of the artist, can be seen as sheer imaginative works of creation, and as such, reflections of the conviction that God created man to be, in his own turn, a creator.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps because there are many different ways of fulfilling the task of kerygma and didache in local church ministries, it is in the concept of koinonia that calligraphy finds its greatest and most unique position in the church. By koinonia, we are speaking of the calling together of the people of the church into community.

We have already briefly touched the main contention in the discussion of calligraphy's function as koinonia, having spoken about the fact that calligraphy is an art form everyone may participate in. Because all persons who write are able to calligraph, this particular art form invites everyone to creative participation. In this sense,

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<sup>8</sup>Whittle, p. 4.

calligraphy can become an instrument of gathering persons together to create, and to share works of art with deep, individual meaning.

Although artistic expression is something everyone can participate in, one problem is in the aspect of self criticism. Each person is often his or her worst critic; for this reason, many individuals never venture to attempt to do anything "artistic," for fear of creating something that is not "beautiful." Calligraphy as an art is able to overcome this problem in two ways.

First, in local church ministry, calligraphy can become purely celebration. The art of Corita Kent may not be considered beautiful as far as the calligraphic elements within it are concerned; indeed, her written message is sometimes difficult to read; however, it is always extremely meaningful as a creation and as a celebration of the artistic impulse. Likewise, calligraphy can involve the pure joy of artistic creation; of manipulating primary materials and secondary materials to the end of this artistic creation. In this sense, there is no judge; there is no "reward" other than fellowship and sharing, perhaps on an evening when people calligraph and subsequently share what is important or meaningful to them.

This touches upon a second way in which calligraphy can help to eliminate the problem of self criticism. Because calligraphy deals not only with forms of line and

space and color, but also with words, a piece of calligraphy can be shared and admired on the basis of the words (poetry) alone. Thus, someone who is not as adept at manipulating the pen and ink may without question have a great deal to share and to communicate via the poetry of his/her creation. If the calligraphic medium is adroit, the calligraphic message still may carry import. Thus, persons who attempt to calligraph need never be ashamed or reluctant to display their work, at least on this level.

Calligraphy may also be important in local church ministry as a means by which symbols may be produced. In many ways, the product of the calligraphic process may become a symbol of unity for the church. We may see a motto calligraphed, and thus may be called to be a community under that motto. In calligraphy, the poetry may become an important source of communal identity.

Examples of this may include projects such as a church Christmas card which may be calligraphed and which may include the names of the members of the church, or a specific saying which may have a great deal of value as far as expressing a vital truth upon which church members may base their lives as Christians. When these examples or others like them are displayed so that all may see, they may become powerful symbols of an inner unity which may not be otherwise expressed or observed.

Finally, I would like to mention, however briefly,

a last point regarding community. If we understand church to be a fellowship of believers worshiping God in the company of one another, we can also understand the importance of social gatherings as a necessary time of fellowship together. This project is being completed with the hope that there may be times when we might come together as a church to create artistic forms. The value of calligraphy has been specifically mentioned; however, we might also add that should calligraphy be introduced as a form of art which can be used in the local church, any subsequent program or gathering which is open to all in the community, such as a workshop or lecture or demonstration, will invariably contribute to the feeling of "community" in the local church.

Art belongs in the local church. Langer states:

When religious imagination is the dominant force in society, art is scarcely separable from it; for a great wealth of actual emotion attends religious experience, and unspoiled, unjaded minds wrestle joyfully for its objective expression, and are carried beyond the occasion that launched their efforts, to pursue the furthest possibilities of the expressions they have found. In an age when art is said to serve religion, religion is really feeding art. Whatever is holy to people inspires artistic conception.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Suzanne K. Langer, Feeling and Form (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 402.

## Chapter IV

### CATALOGUE OF THE CALLIGRAPHIC WORK

The Bible is, in the finest sense, the most imaginative book ever written. No theme could be greater, no characterization more meaningful, no height or depth more profound, no insight more penetrating, no unity of structure in so diverse a framework more pronounced, no reality of presentation more genuine.<sup>1</sup>

On the following pages is a catalogue of the work which has been calligraphed to accompany this project. In calligraphing, I have definitely felt a kind of participation with the words which I have tried to describe earlier. It has been my personal experience that calligraphing of Biblical passages has been the most meaningful, and it is thus that I have chosen to calligraph from the Bible for this project.

The Sermon on the Mount was chosen because it presented a corpus of material which is composed of diverse elements within its general unity. Thus, although many may consider it today to be one unified "sermon," delivered by Jesus to his disciples on a mountain, this does not necessarily represent its origin. I believe that we have lost much of the insight into the history of the Bible

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde S. Kilby, Christianity and Aesthetics (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), pp. 19-20.

through our lack of knowledge of form criticism in the local church.

Much of the information in the catalogue regarding form in the Sermon on the Mount has been called to my attention through the course on the Sermon on the Mount taught by Dr. H. D. Betz, in the spring semester, 1976. The knowledge that I have tried to share in this project does not even scratch the surface of the meanings that the course has revealed to me. However, I would hope that the facts mentioned in the catalogue are sufficient to either encourage further research into the Sermon on the Mount, or to satisfy the inquiries of persons interested in this project as a source of information for local church ministry.



LEAF ONE

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

23" x 14½"

The hand used for the calligraphing of this leaf is called the uncial hand. It is a hand which was used by the Greeks as early as the third century B.C. Its name derives from the fact that the first examples found were in Latin, and contained letters the size of a Roman inch. The uncial hand reached its height of perfection in Roman texts around the fourth through the fifth centuries. By the eight century, they had degenerated in style, but were still in use.

Uncials were used for such a long period primarily because they are easily written. These letters have rounded forms and are examples of a hand which illustrates a great deal of adaptability to individual calligraphers. Therefore, they are letter forms which could be easily taught to interested persons in local churches.

Although not yet considered lower case letter forms, there are certain letters which begin to develop toward the forms which we now use as lower case. Especially evident is the letter E which in its uncial, rounded form, resembles the lower case e.

The versal used on this leaf is a built up italic versal, here incorporated because it is simple and elegant. To highlight it, skeletal lines of gold leaf have been

added within the versal, and green ornamentation in what I call the "tendrill" style, popular throughout the history of calligraphy have been added with gold leaf specks. Illumination around the versal include dynamic lines and forms coupled with design motifs from nature: growing vines, flowers.

Also added are blue letters which indicate the first letter of a verse as indicated in the Bible.

This particular leaf does a great deal to illustrate some of the formal characteristics of the text. There is repetition in the text which is mirrored in the vertical alignment of the individual blessings. Form has been manipulated to show the juxtaposition of the individual blessings, in opposition to the reason for the blessing.

LEAF TWO

The Salt of the Earth          Matthew 5:13          14½" x 11½"

This leaf has been calligraphed in a hand known as Southern Gothic, which developed in Southern Europe, especially in Southern France, Southern Spain, and Italy. It is also called Rotunda or half Gothic because it is rounder, and far less compressed than Northern Gothic. This hand was used primarily during the ninth through the fifteenth centuries, and was reserved strictly for sacred texts. Southern Gothic is generally considered to be an easily legible hand, which derives much of its beauty from its solid, black lines, which sit squarely upon the horizontal line. Added interest results from the frequent joining of letters and abbreviations.

The versal is in the Southern Gothic style. Most manuscripts calligraphed in this hand contain a large number of oversized versals throughout the text. This versal, which has been gold leafed, is surrounded by a rectangular field of brown. Here, the colors support the imagery of a brief but "illuminating" wisdom saying. The brown conveys a symbolic representation of the earth that is mentioned in the text dealing with the salt of the earth. Versals like this one are generally considered simple and elegant, and seem to go well with a simple and brief, yet

meaningful passage such as this. Color has ben repeated throughout the text whenever an uppercase letter appears.

LEAF THREE

The Light of the World    Matthew 5:14-16    18" x 11½"

Leaf three contains a brief wisdom saying also calligraphed in the Southern Gothic hand. The formal considerations are identical to leaf two since these two and others to follow were taken to be similar in form and intent.

The versal, as in leaf two, is a large gold leafed letter in Southern Gothic style. This leaf is set within a red rectangular field, the gold and red becoming symbolic of the idea of the light. Again, as in leaf two, color has been repeated throughout the text whenever an upper case letter has been calligraphed.

LEAF FOUR

Think Not

Matthew 5:17-20

22" x 17"

This leaf has been calligraphed in the uncial hand. It has been executed in such a way as to demonstrate how calligraphy strives to create a solid block of letters upon the page. In this instance, however, the result was less than that which was desired. There is a definite problem with the right hand margin, in its diagonal movement to the left as it progresses. This is due to a general unwillingness to divide words, and an unfortunate lack of careful attention to this problem as the calligraphing was taking place.

In local churches, especially with beginners or persons who are not experienced calligraphers, this may become very common. Although it can generally be avoided through practice, sometimes this type of margin may result due to the peculiar sequence of words whereby a margin such as this one may result. This illustrates something less than good calligraphing. However, it is one way of demonstrating that a piece of calligraphic art may be mediocre in the aspect of the plastic art, but yet be successful in terms of poetry and the impact that the message carries.

The versal has been copied from numerous examples of a simple uncial gothic versal completely surrounded

by a field of gold leaf. This versal has been completely separated from the text, which has been one way of calling special attention to the first letter of a body of material, thereby signalling its beginning, as well as a means of displaying the beauty of the solid block of calligraphed letters within the text.

LEAF FIVE

You Shall Not Kill      Matthew 5:21-26      23" x 14½"

This is the first of a series of so-called antithetical sayings of Jesus contained within the Sermon on the Mount. It has been calligraphed in the uncial hand because of that hand's formal qualities which render it easily read, and yet elegant and monumental.

The formal considerations have resulted in a piece which is divided into two parts, as the texts are. The first part is a statement which includes the quotation of a statement of the Law. This has been calligraphed simply with no variation in letter size. Colors have been used to distinguish the Law. In this leaf, the saying "You shall not kill" is the Law.

Juxtaposed is the new Law which Jesus preaches here. This has been calligraphed apart from the first section. However, unity is maintained formally by the versal which bridges the space between the two elements. The versal indicates that it is the second section (the new Law) which is the more important.

The versal used for this leaf is a versal form that occurs quite frequently with uncial letters. It has been ornamented with dynamic "tendrils" lines which add movement to the letter and make it come alive. It excites the versal; makes it stand out to the eye of the observer.



LEAF SIX

On Adultery

Matthew 5:27-30

23" x 14½"

This is the second in the series of Jesus' anti-thetical sayings. It has been calligraphed in the uncial hand, with the identical form considerations as the previous leaf. The form of these leaves unifies them, and identifies them as a series of generically similar sayings.

The versal used for this leaf is slightly different than the previous one. It is a simpler letter form, which closely resembles the letters used within the text. This letter form has merely been "built up," which is consistent with the manner in which the earliest versals were conceived. To this built up, simple uncial versal, which has been colored a deep blue, tendril ornamentation in turquoise has been added.

LEAF SEVEN

On Divorce

Matthew 5:31-32

23" x 14½"

This is the third of the series of antithetical sayings. It is a short passage, and therefore has lent itself to a somewhat less elaborate calligraphic expression than the others. The form however, still maintains a unity with the other antithetical sayings, and is consistent with all the formal characteristics mentioned previously.

The uncial for this leaf is a special uncial versal, used very frequently with either Gothic hands or Unical hands, and therefore called Gothic Unicial. This style of versal represents a general movement away from the simpler versals such as the built up versal used for leaf six, and a movement to the much more elaborate versals used for Gothic texts. It is therefore a transitional form.

Additional ornamentation has been done in indigo. The two colors lend themselves to an extremely sober effect which seems to adequately convey a mood about the saying which is serious in spite of its relative brevity.

LEAVES EIGHT, NINE, AND TEN

Swearing Falsely	Matthew 5:33-37	23" x 14½"
An Eye for an Eye	Matthew 5:38-42	23" x 14½"
Love Your Neighbor	Matthew 5:43-48	23" x 14½"

These three leaves are the third, fourth, and fifth of the antithetical sayings of Jesus. The considerations for the formal aspects of the text and the calligraphic art are identical to the previous antithetical sayings.

These three leaves all show similar versal forms, being all variations of versals that have been found historically with the uncial hand, and all containing to some degree the dynamic line used to highlight the two-color ornamentation.

LEAVES ELEVEN, TWELVE, THIRTEEN

On Practicing Your Piety	Matthew 6:1-4	23" x 14½"
On Praying	Matthew 6:5-15	29¼ x 23
On Fasting	Matthew 6:16-18	23" x 14½"

These leaves constitute a series of three calligraphed in a hand called Insular half-uncial, which came into use around the third century. Although the hand appeared throughout Western Europe, it reached its height of perfection in Ireland. For this reason, the hand is often called Irish half-uncial.

Insular half-uncial is characterized by wedge-shaped tops, square bottoms that sit firmly upon the line, a pronounced curvature in the ascenders and descenders, and a characteristic pull to the right as the final stroke of the rounded forms. In this hand, historically, we find the first use of miniscule forms. Note that there are two different forms for the letters D and N. They are used at different times, depending upon whether they appear as the initial, or final letter of a word, or whether they appear within the word.

The texts calligraphed in these three leaves are similar in nature, constituting general teachings of Jesus. As such, they were considered dynamic, monumental pieces, of great importance to the Christian listener. Insular half-uncial seemed a very appropriate hand to use in the

calligraphing of these three texts because of some considerations of Ireland's past.

Historically, Ireland was separated from the mainland of Europe, and was thus able to maintain a degree of independence from the rest of the European nations. When this hand was first brought to Ireland by missionaries, the Irish monks were left to develop it to its height while completely neglecting other hands which were concurrently developing on the continent. Generally, this hand was reserved solely for holy works, and it was through the use of their holy literature calligraphed in the insular half-uncial hand, that Irish monks spread their faith on the European mainland and in England and Wales in a missionary thrust of their own in the seventh century. The insular half-uncial hand, then, has the connotation of the missionary work of the church, which connotes both kerygma and didache. For this reason, it was chosen as the hand with which to calligraph this series.

The versals chosen for these three texts are all similar in style. They belong to one of the many versals styles which have historically accompanied insular half-uncial texts. The art of Ireland has been characterized by the use of open, light framework, and many dynamic, almost frantic, interwoven and intertwining lines and motifs from nature. The versals are consistent with the characteristics of Irish art in general, and in addition

were colored green because of the traditional association of green with Ireland as evidenced in its nickname, the Emerald Isle.

Formally, leaves eleven and thirteen are quite similar in their treatment of the text as one large block of material. However, leaf twelve has been treated differently because of the existence within the block of material of the Lord's Prayer. This is important enough to be separated from the portion of the text block preceding it and after it which is considered to be instruction. Emphasis is thus placed upon the position of the Lord's Prayer in context. Leaf twelve emphasizes that there should be an awareness of the prayer within the framework of the instructions given with it by Jesus.

LEAF FOURTEEN

On Laying up Treasures      Matthew 6:19-21      17½" x 14"

The saying regarding laying up of treasures follows immediately in the present text after the series of instruction calligraphed in leaves eleven, twelve, and thirteen. Dr. Betz has indicated that this particular text is proverbial in nature. As such it is not a part of the preceding three leaves. However, this text was calligraphed in the insular half-uncial hand as were the preceding three primarily because it was felt that as far as the present text goes, and especially as it is viewed in the local church, the addition of this fourth to the series of the preceding three may constitute a unity of material to be taken together as instruction.

Because the four are calligraphed on separate leaves, it is yet possible to encourage consideration of the fourth as being different from critically, and historically, by taking the fourteenth leaf as a separate entity.

The versal chosen for this leaf is identical to those for the preceding three leaves, and demonstrates the same considerations and characteristics of the insular half-uncial versal.

LEAVES FIFTEEN, AND SIXTEEN

The Eye is the Lamp	Matthew 6:22-23	14½" x 11½"
Having Two Masters	Matthew 6:24	14½" x 11½"

Leaf fifteen and sixteen have been calligraphed in a manner identical to leaves two and three. The hand is Southern Gothic, and the versal is large and gold-leafed in the style of the traditional Southern Gothic versals.

Leaf fifteen speaks about the eye as the lamp of the body. The colors of the versal were chosen to symbolize the brightness of the light of the eye within the blue field of darkness. As in the previous leaves, blue is repeated as additional ornamentation for the uppercase letters.

Leaf sixteen is similar, having symbolic representations in the use of colors for the versal. Gold has always symbolized that which is precious. Here, in this saying which juxtaposes God and mammon (riches), the gold is a symbol of God; and the purple is a symbol of material wealth. Purple was chosen because historically, it was considered a symbol of material wealth since the pigment was obtained from the shell of a marine animal which was difficult to obtain, and therefore expensive enough to be reserved for dyeing the clothes of only the wealthiest persons.



LEAF SEVENTEEN

Do Not be Anxious

Matthew 6:25-34

23" x 14½"

Jesus' saying on anxiety was calligraphed in the insular half-uncial hand. This particular text demonstrates how that hand may have appeared outside of Ireland. In this case, the leaf is patterned after manuscripts from France. The difference in its treatment of form gives it an identity which is distinct from leaves eleven through fourteen, even though the hand is identical.

At many points in the history of calligraphy, we note that although words are separated from each other by spaces, calligraphers strove to achieve a solid block of letters upon the page. This meant manipulating letters to a certain degree, especially in order to achieve a vertically straight right hand margin. This text demonstrates a conscious effort to duplicate that process. Note that letters have been added in much smaller form than the remainder of the text in order to end a line as closely as possible to a specific point. In addition, the border of ornamentation at the bottom of the left hand column is an effort to even the two columns out exactly.

The versal and the ornamentation used for this leaf are typically French, as is the use of smaller letters to calligraph in double columns. French calligraphy has always tended to be more condensed than other national

hands. It has also tended to use two or more colors quite evenly throughout the ornamentation. In addition, French ornamentation has been less frantic than Irish ornamentation using motifs from nature drawn with gentle curves and larger pen nibs which make them thicker, less dynamic than Irish half-uncial ornamentation. It is not until the Northern Gothic hand was used in Northern Europe that the ornamentation equalled the Irish in its quality of dynamic line.

In leaf seventeen, color is also used within the text to emphasize three words. In this text, the three words are three key words of Jesus. They refer to three imperatives which are addressed to the hearer of the sermon. Thus, we are admonished to look, consider, and to seek. All three share a common link to sight and the eye, and in that sense, deserve to be in some way linked by calligraphic motif. However, it is in their role as extremely important key words that we find the greatest justification for their special treatment with color.

LEAVES EIGHTEEN AND TWENTY

Judge Not	Matthew 7:1-5	23" x 14½"
Ask, and it Shall be Given	Matthew 7:7-12	23" x 11½"

These two leaves have been calligraphed in identical hands. They represent the Northern Gothic hand, which was used primarily in the Northern areas of Europe: England, the Low Countries, Northern France, and Germany. It was used most extensively during the ninth through the fifteenth centuries. Around the thirteenth century, it reached its height of use and perfection along with the High Gothic phase of European architecture.

At this point in calligraphy's history, there is a definite set of upper and lower case letters which were used much as we use the two today. The Gothic hand is characterized by compressed letters so much so that in German High Gothic hands, letters are often difficult to distinguish. The hand also became known as Black Letter since there was so much compression that there was little space between letters, giving a page the semblance of a mass of black ink.

Also characteristic are hairline flourishes at the tops of the ascenders, and the beginning of the dotted i. In this hand, the letter i had to be dotted (here, using a hairline diagonal) in order to distinguish that letter

from the other letters which tended to resemble the i.

As mentioned in the introduction to this project, Northern Gothic is also sometimes called Old English, and is frequently used to calligraph material of a sacred nature. It is therefore a hand which gives the illusion immediately of literary material which is sacred. The hand was chosen as an example of how familiar persons are with the kinds of moods that calligraphy can evoke.

The two leaves calligraphed are examples of the height of Northern Gothic perfection in sacred calligraphy. In Bibles, and also in Books of Hours, especially in France and the Low Countries, Northern Gothic was used along with extremely lavish illumination to produce beautiful works of art. Leaves eighteen and twenty are examples of this type of art. Both are patterned after forms commonly found in Books of Hours, having a relatively small body of literary material calligraphed upon a page, surrounded subsequently with ornate motifs from nature, such as the vines, flowers, and leaves. In addition, much detail and attention are given to the use of many colors which produces an extremely colorful, festive effect.

The versals are large, gold leafed copies of letter forms that appear with Northern Gothic hands. In leaf eighteen, the initial J is an invented form, there being no real counterpart in historic models. That letter was

closely related to the I, and is patterned after models of that letter which have been observed in other examples.

LEAF NINETEEN

Do Not Give Dogs What is Holy    Matthew 7:6    14½" x 11½"

This leaf is used as an example of the potentials for calligraphy to artistically present a brief saying or "motto." In this example, Dr. Betz has called the text of Matthew 7:6 a riddle. It is a good example of the "trap for meditation," and has been presented in a brief, simple calligraphic manner.

There is no versal used for this saying, which has been calligraphed in insular half-uncial. The simplicity of the calligraphic medium tends to focus the viewer upon the words. Here, more than in other examples of calligraphy which include large, colorful versals and illumination with various design motifs, the importance is placed upon the Langerian concept of the poetry of the calligraphy.

LEAF TWENTY-ONE

Enter By the Narrow Gate      Matthew 7:13-14      11½" x 10"

The hand used to calligraph this leaf is a modified uncial. It is an eclectic, invented hand, having some of the characteristics of the uncial hand, combined with an added angularity which indicates a relationship to the Gothic. This represents the kind of versatility calligraphy has, and the kind of adaptability one can exercise with one's own penmanship.

The leaf has been calligraphed in a way to illustrate the poetic form of the passage. Through the use of indentation, the formal aspect of the poetry becomes obvious to the reader. In addition, it becomes easy to see that the passage is composed of three parts: a general statement, followed by two parallel members; the first describing the fate of the many, and the second, its antithesis, describing the fate of the few.

Although there are no large versals, this leaf demonstrates a common occurrence in the historic models. Colors have been used to illuminate certain special letters; in this case, letters which begin the words of the first line (which tends to place emphasis upon the first line as well as differentiate it from the others), and subsequently, the first letter of the first word of each line

of poetry. This emphasizes the poetic form of the text and also adds to the appearance of the entire text.



LEAF TWENTY-TWO

Beware of False Prophets      Matthew 7:15-20      15" x 11½"

Leaf twenty-two has been calligraphed in the modified uncial hand which was invented from uncial and gothic elements. In this example, the hand has been used in a very simple setting, with no colors, and no special treatments of letters or versals. It is used to illustrate a very sober warning of the exhortation's beginning, and achieves a kind of mood of seriousness which is reminiscent of warning signs that might be posted to keep intruders out of one's property.

This is an example of a very early stage of the calligraphic process, whereby the message becomes much more important than the letter forms or the illumination. The effect is a simple, solid block of black letters upon the page.

LEAF TWENTY-THREE

Not Everyone

Matthew 7:21-23

14½" x 11½"

This leaf was calligraphed in the uncial hand. The primary difference here is attributable to its use of color to highlight specific words within the text. In this case, the colors have been used primarily to indicate special treatment of the Christological title "Lord, Lord," which occurs twice within this text.

The colors correspond to the colors used for the large uncial style versal and the ornamentation which includes lines which give the illusion of growth from nature in a tight-knit encompassing design around the versal.

Color has also been used to indicate the first letter of the initial word in the Biblical verses within the text. Again, they are in harmony with the general color pattern throughout the text, and are a unifying element for the leaf.

LEAF TWENTY-FOUR

The Parable of the Builders    Matthew 7:24-27    16½" x 14½"

One of Jesus' most well-known forms of speech is the parable. Here, the parable in Matthew has been isolated from the other material because it constitutes an individual corpus of material. This leaf has been calligraphed in the uncial hand, primarily because it is a hand that is easily read, and is one of the more beautiful forms of calligraphy for modern calligraphers. It is also the one hand which may be easiest to use in the local church ministry because it is the hand which comes closest to duplicating the movements of the hand which we generally employ as we write today.

One element which is different in this leaf is the adaptation of the calligraphy to the form of the versal. Unlike other leaves which have strived to show the block of solid letters in calligraphy, this leaf shows that letters can also be formally adapted to a versal. This tends to incorporate the versal completely within the text, and to make the entire leaf an integrated whole.

The versal itself is an adaptation of the uncial E with an extended horizontal bar, chosen for its formal beauty. In many historic examples, this kind of barred E was used especially to stretch out a word if it ended a few centimeters away from the right hand margin, in order

to achieve a perfectly even margin. The versal has been colored with brown, which suggests the idea of the elements of the earth: the rock and the sand which are suggested by the text. The blue was chosen as being symbolic of the water of the rain and flood, again as suggested by the text.

LEAF TWENTY-FIVE

And it Came to Pass      Matthew 7:28      14½" x 10½"

This leaf has been calligraphed primarily as a means of ending the project. Just as leaf one began with the framework of verse one, this leaf completes the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the book of Matthew.

Calligraphed in uncial hand, this leaf, in its letter forms and in its versal and ornamentation were done to correspond as closely as possible to the forms in leaf one.

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## LEAVES

In the original manuscript, the leaves are presented on 2 x 2 slides and are bound in mounted in slide holders.